

# Big Brothers Big Sisters<sup>®</sup>

## MOUNTAIN REGION

*“When I first volunteered, I had no idea that I would be matched with this incredible girl who would become such an important person to me.” – Big Sister Valerie*



Emily and Valerie, matched April 2011

The trauma of divorce hit Emily particularly hard. As her mother created a new life for her family as a single parent, she saw the pain that Emily was in, and she wanted nothing more than to allow her to be a child again. She worked tirelessly to provide for Emily, her twin brothers, and her niece whom she had recently taken in with a loving home environment. She also recognized that Emily and her brothers were longing for additional friendship and support, and she wanted them to have another adult in their lives that could help provide them with time, attention, and friendship, so she enrolled her children in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

Emily first met her big sister, Valerie, when she was 9 years old.

They immediately bonded over their common interests in art, reading, writing, and acting.

Now, over 9 years later, they continue to be very close. Valerie, an editor and writer, was always impressed with Emily’s intelligence and has provided Emily with guidance on homework, school papers, and school applications. One of their first and favorite activities was baking a cake without a recipe, which later involved them having a whipped cream fight resulting in non-stop laughter. They’ve gone to a craft show, to the opera, out to eat, BBBS holiday luncheons, therapeutic horseback riding, the Folk Art Market, movies, Bowl for Kids’ Sake, the park, and even cleaned Emily’s room together. Valerie has been supportive of Emily’s school activities and has seen Emily play basketball, volleyball, and cheerlead. Valerie has also seen Emily in her school plays. Their favorite part of being together, though, is their long talks.



Valerie and Emily celebrating their 1-year Match Anniversary

Emily now has the confidence to attend a private preparatory school, which challenges her academically. Emily has also been involved with the Breakthrough program, which helps students prepare for college, and she loves to share her experiences in the program with Valerie. Although Emily will graduate from high school in May, their relationship will continue for a lifetime. Valerie plans to “be there for her graduation, marriage, and kids.” Emily’s mother is so appreciative of Big Brothers Big Sisters and is grateful that Emily has a great Big Sister and friend. She believes that being part of the program has been instrumental in helping Emily achieve her academic goals.

*“It feels good to make a positive impact on a young life. Although sometimes I feel like I’m the lucky one. I guess it’s a two-way street. Maybe everyone should have a Big or a Little in their life.”*

*– Big Sister Valerie*